

THE TEXT OF THE RĀMĀYAṆA

In a paper presented to the ICANAS conference in August last year at Hamburg, I gave some initial results of my investigations into the textual history of the Vālmiki *Rāmāyaṇa*¹. I am now presenting a further progress report on this research, based this time on a selection of manuscripts from northern India, whereas in the previous paper I concentrated on evidence from manuscripts written in Malayāḷam script. My material again comes partly from manuscripts identified during a tour of India at the end of 1981 and partly from work on the Chandra Shum Shere collection in the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

It would perhaps be helpful if I began by summarising the main points of the previous paper, since I shall be drawing on it during the present one. I commented then that, in view of the large numbers of *Rāmāyaṇa* manuscripts that are preserved in various collections, the number of manuscripts used for the Critical Edition is really quite small. As an illustration of this point, I might remark that the previous paper dealt with five manuscripts (with others incidentally referred to) and another half dozen are considered in this. These eleven manuscripts add well over a third to the number used for the Critical Edition of the *Ayodhyākāṇḍa* (and more than a quarter even to those that were initially

1. The paper has since been published as *Textual Studies in Vālmiki's Rāmāyaṇa*, «Journal of the Asiatic Society», Calcutta, 28.3 (1986), pp. 14-24. I gratefully acknowledge the speed and efficiency with which the Asiatic Society printed it.

collated)². It is not surprising, therefore, that together they add substantially to the body of variant readings recorded in the critical apparatus. This material is significant, even if of no great value in itself, for building up a truer picture of the complex relationships between the different recensions and versions. Again, I focus exclusively on the *Ayodhyākāṇḍa*.

Apart from the Devanāgarī manuscripts, the Critical Edition groups its manuscripts by the script employed but, as I stress in the previous paper, the numbers of manuscripts in each version varies considerably. The point is equally valid of the Critical Edition of the *Mahābhārata* and has been commented on in a recent article by John Dunham, who says:

The scripts of manuscripts of the *Mahābhārata* used in the C.E. do not exhaust the number of those identified as having been used in India during the past five hundred years. Among the most significant omissions would appear to be Uriyā, Kannaḍa and Nandināgarī. Why manuscripts in these scripts were not used is not stated in the C.E. It may have been that old manuscripts in these scripts are very rare, or that the manuscripts turned out to contain versions which were «eclectic on no recognizable principles»³.

We are equally in the dark about the motives of the editors of the Critical Edition of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. However, manuscripts of the *Rāmāyaṇa* do exist in at least one of these scripts. In fact, the Asiatic Society, Calcutta, houses a complete set of manuscripts in Oriya script for all the *kāṇḍas* of the *Rāmāyaṇa*⁴. The *Ayodhyākāṇḍa*

2. The Critical Edition used 29 mss. for establishing the text of the *Ayodhyākāṇḍa* (the same number as for the *Araṇya* and *Sundara kāṇḍas*) but 43 were collated originally; cf. U.P. SHAH, *Rāmāyaṇa Manuscripts of Different Versions*, in V. RAGHAVAN, ed., *The Rāmāyaṇa Tradition in Asia*, New Delhi, 1980, pp. 93-102.

3. JOHN DUNHAM, *Manuscripts used in the Critical Edition of the Mahābhārata: A survey and discussion*, «Journal of South Asian Literature», 20.1 (1985), pp. 1-15.

4. These are in the Government Collection, nos. 5613-5619, together with a second ms. of the *Yuddhakāṇḍa* (no. 5620); the individual mss., all on palm-leaf, appear to be of varying date. The ms. of the *Ayodhyākāṇḍa* (no. 5614) is probably of the 18th century and is wormeaten and in part badly damaged; it consists of ff. 1-143 and measures 15½×1½ inches, with 4-5 ll. on a side; erasures are by scoring through, with marginal corrections; single or double *daṇḍas* are used without apparent system. I am grateful to the Asiatic Society for providing a microfilm of this ms. and others (to be referred to later) in their collection.

manuscript will be one of the main ones to be studied later in this paper.

A further point that I made previously was that the supposed consistency of the S recension is not as complete as superficially it appears to be. In particular I adduced the evidence of the Trivandrum ms. 14052, which aligns so closely with the anomalous M4 of the Critical Edition, and argued that there was evidence of a divergent tradition which should not be too lightly dismissed. Incidentally, the tendency to dismiss the evidence of M4 out of hand is general, as shown most recently by Pollock's remark: «M4 is a contaminated and virtually worthless manuscript»⁵. But even within the manuscripts aligned with the commentarial traditions the evidence presented in the Critical Edition is by no means complete. As an example of this, I shall examine a group of three manuscripts which all align with the tradition represented by Dt1 in the Critical Edition.

Though close to Dt1, they in fact show greater affinity with each other on several occasions, in particular sharing readings that are not given at all in the critical apparatus. Two of these manuscripts come from the Chandra Shum Shere collection (b. 13 and c. 342) and one from another collection in the Bodleian Library (Ms Mill 139). The oldest is probably Ch.Sh.Sh. c. 342, which is however damaged and incomplete; Ch.Sh.Sh. b. 13 forms part of a set, containing also the Tilaka commentary, in which the first five *kāṇḍas* are in one hand and the *Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa* is dated Saṃvat 1874 (1816 A.D.); the third, Ms Mill 139, gives the appearance of being the youngest⁶. It should perhaps be added at this point that

5. SHELDON I. POLLOCK, *tr.*, *The Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmiki: An Epic of Ancient India*, volume II, *Ayodhyākāṇḍa*, Princeton, N.J., 1986, p. 340 (note on 2.8.5), where admittedly he is arguing against the clearly secondary version of the N recension with which M4 agrees here, as often.

6. Ch.Sh.Sh. c. 342, in Devanāgarī script and on Indian paper; consists of ff. 1-100 (f. 6 missing) ending at 2 App. I.14.73, 12.5×34 cm. with 7 ll. to a side; there is some damage to all folios; side margins are ruled in red, there are no *daṇḍas* but verses are numbered, and there are no erasures or marginalia but dashes for lacunae in its exemplar. Ch.Sh.Sh. b. 13, in Devanāgarī script and on Indian paper, is complete on ff. 1-283, 14×38 cm. with 10-14 ll. to a side (text in centre surrounded by the comm.); side margins are drawn in red and the invocation, nu-

the condition of manuscripts has possibly influenced their selection for the Critical Edition unconsciously but significantly. It is certainly noteworthy that the manuscripts used for the Critical Edition are essentially complete, whereas many older manuscripts have lost parts of their text. A tendency to choose complete texts may well have resulted in the use of younger manuscripts.

Let me begin with c. 342. Of the manuscripts employed in the Critical Edition, it sides most often with Dt1 but there are also a significant number of occasions (about half as many as those where it goes with Dt1 alone) where it has readings not recorded in the critical apparatus and almost as large a number of instances of readings not found in Dt1. Of the readings not found in the critical apparatus over half are shared with the other two manuscripts. In my previous paper I commented that two of the manuscripts then examined contained a reading recorded only from a printed edition (*mām* for *me* at 2.9a) and remarked that it was a further indication of the incompleteness of the manuscript evidence in the Critical Edition. Interestingly, all three of these manuscripts also contain that reading, which is thus shown to be widely attested. Moreover, the other two (b. 13 and Mill 139) also have the reading given for the Kumbakhonam edition only in their repeat of 14* 10, to cite only instances within the first few sargas⁷. Variant readings not recorded in the critical apparatus comprise (from the first four sargas only, as an illustration): *trailokyapatināthena* for *trailokyam api nāthena* at 2.11c, *virye sāksāc chacīpateḥ* for *viryeṇāpi śacīpateḥ* at the repeat of 1.26f (shared with b. 13 and Mill 139), *guṇasampannam* for *vṛttasampannam* at the repeat of 1.28a (shared with the other two manuscripts), *dvijottamau* for *dvijaṣabhaḥ* at 3.5d, *tyajasva* for *tyajethā* at 3.26d, *pradiśya cāsa-* *naṃ cāsmāi rāmaṃ ca punar abravīt* for *pradiśya cāsmāi ruciram*

merals and colophons are daubed with red; erasures are in yellow with marginal corrections sec. man.; ! is regularly written for l. Ms. Mill 139, in Devanāgarī script on yellowed Indian paper, is complete on ff. 1-127, 13×40 cm. with 10 ll. to a side; there are no daṇḍas but verses are numbered; it is very neatly but unintelligently written, with erasures scored through and lacunae indicated by dashes.

7. Less significantly, b. 13 also has at 2.4d a reading recorded only for Cg and K (ed.): *abhirakṣitāḥ* for *abhirakṣitā*. Similarly Mill 139 reads with K (ed.) *nardamta* for *nardantam* at 2.13d.

āsanam punar abravīt at 4.11cd (shared with the other two), *dāruṇagrahair* for *dāruṇair grahair* at 4.18b (shared with the other two), *'bhyupagamat* for *'bhyupagataḥ* at 4.21a (shared with the other two), *puṣyayoge* for *puṣyayogaṃ* at 4.21c, and *abhibhāṣya* for *abhivāḍya* at 4.28d (shared with b. 13 only). Also lacking in the critical apparatus is the reading in c. 342 at 3.9a of *mlechhācāryās*, given in the commentaries of Kataka and Govindarāja and for which Raghavan argued strongly⁸. Within the same compass, we may note the occasions when c. 342 does not go with Dt1 but with other manuscripts: 20* 4 (with Ś1 D1-7 T1.3 G M, also b. 13), 14* 2 (with Dd1), 14* 3 (with T3), 2.5b (with T3 G3), 2.27b (with Dd1 G3 M3 Ctp), the repeat of 1.28b (with T G M1-3, also b. 13), and 4.7d (Dg1 Dd1).

The second manuscript, b. 13, containing as it does the Tilaka commentary, can naturally be expected to follow closely the tradition represented in the Critical Edition by Dt1. Interestingly, on one occasion a reading shared only with Dt1, *medinīm* at 36* 2, has been corrected in another hand to *vimānaṃ*, the reading given in the Critical Edition⁹. Variant readings not recorded in the critical apparatus for the first four sargas include, in addition to those noted already in connection with c. 342: *vyavasata* for *nyavasat* at 1.6a, *pārthiva* for *pārthivam* at 2.15d, *bhāskaraḥ* for *rāghavaḥ* at 3.19b, and *niḥśeṣaṃ* for *niśeṣaṃ* at 4.23b; all of these are clearly corruptions rather than real alternative readings. Occasions when b. 13 goes not with Dt1 but with other manuscripts are: the repeat of 1.28b (with T G M1-3, also c. 342), 2.32a (D5) and 5.2d (V1 G3). This more limited number of occasions, compared with c. 342, merely serves to reinforce the picture of its greater closeness to — though by no means identity with — Dt1. This is further strengthened by the fact that it also shares with Dt1 the insertion of 2054* (the only * passage unique to Dt1 in the *Ayodhyā-kāṇḍa*)¹⁰.

8. V. RAGHAVAN, *Rāmāyaṇa Quotations and Textual Criticism*, «Mélanges d'Indianisme à la mémoire de Louis Renou», Paris, 1968, pp. 595-604 (see p. 597).

9. This falls within the lacuna in c. 342 (f. 6 missing), so its reading cannot be determined, and Mill 139 has the standard reading.

10. This passage falls after the end of the text extant in c. 342, and my col-

The third manuscript, Mill 139, in fact shows even more unique readings than ones shared with Dt1 alone; however, many of these are a result of its minor misreadings of its exemplar, including quite frequent omission of visarga and its occasional confusion with anusvāra. Yet, even when these are discounted, it still has a higher proportion of readings not attested in the critical apparatus (though in several cases, of course, shared with the other two manuscripts in this group)¹¹. Among these is the omission of 6.20, while conversely it reads 7.31d[l.v.], omitted by Dt1; despite its lateness, this manuscript is certainly not directly derivative from Dt1, rather the reverse. Particularly interesting is its reading *kiṃ janasyāśya śaṃsa me* for 7.5d, being intermediate between *kiṃ janasya ca* of the text and *janasyāśya ca* of Dt1. Other such variants seem genuine alternative readings, not mere errors; examples include the reading *'bhyupagamat* at 4.21a (shared with c. 342 and b. 13) and *saṃvikṣya* for *sarvāsu* at 6.13a. But it also has a number of readings not found in Dt1 and shared with other manuscripts; examples occur at 14* 2 (with Dd1), 2.32a and 4.28d (both with D5), 116* 4 (with M2), 7.16b (with D2) and 7.21b (with Dg1), while there are also the three readings shared with the Kumbhakonam edition only that have already been mentioned.

To proceed now to the Northern recension, rather than manuscripts merely written in North India (as the last three were), I shall concentrate on what the Critical Edition designates the NE recension by examining two manuscripts in Bengali script and the *Ayodhyākāṇḍa* from the set in Oriya script already mentioned. One of the reasons for selecting the two Bengali manuscripts is that they have early dates, both belonging to the first half of the 17th century; by contrast, the Bengali manuscripts of the Critical Edition, though undated, appear later¹². The earlier of the two, dated Lakṣmaṇa Saṃvat 507 (1626 A.D.), is unfortunately frag-

lation of Mill 139 has not reached the appropriate point.

11. In its first half dozen sargas unrecorded variants, ignoring minor misreadings, total 32, while readings shared with Dt1 alone number 25.

12. Two can, however, be inferentially dated; the ms. of B2 also contains a *Bālākāṇḍa* dated in Śaka 1711 (1789 A.D.) and that of B3 continues through to the *Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa*, which is dated Śaka 1755 (1833 A.D.).

mentary, consisting of the end of the *Ayodhyākāṇḍa* only¹³. The variant readings occurring do not align it decisively with any of the Bengali manuscripts of the Critical Edition, although it shares slightly more with B3 than with any other and has least in common with B4. Indeed, at times (for example at 95.43) its readings are nearer to those of the Critical Edition than of the B manuscripts. It also contains an appreciable number of variants not hitherto recorded; for example, in its first complete sarga it contains the following instances: *rāmārthe* for the *rāmārthaṃ* of Ś1 Ñ B D6 at 96.5a, *śakate* for *kurute* at 2188* 1, *deśakālānurūpasya* for *°rūpeṇa* of Ś1 B1 / *°rūpās ca* of Ñ B2-4 D3 at 2194* 2, and *pādaṃ* for *pādān* in the v.l. for 96.19b of Ś1 Ñ B D6. In general, however, it may be taken as a fairly orthodox representative of the Bengali tradition and thus as confirming that tradition's currency by the 17th century.

The other manuscript in Bengali script shows rather more divergence from the B manuscripts of the Critical Edition, though broadly following the same tradition¹⁴. For example, though starting in the same way at the third sarga of the Critical Edition, it prefixes it with a different selection from 59* (11.5-10) than occurs in those manuscripts containing any of it (Ñ2 B1-4). Similarly, it has a unique order of verses at the start of sarga 9¹⁵. Previously unrecorded readings from its first half dozen sargas comprise: *ta-smai cāpy ucchritaṃ* for *tasmai cābhyudyataṃ* at 3.18a (but com-

13. This is the ms. 4824 of the Government Collection in the Asiatic Society, Calcutta. It is written on palm-leaf, 15×3 inches, with 6-8 ll. to a side, and is also much damaged; only ff. 132-149 remain, starting at 2.95.39cd. The full colophon reads: *ity ārse rāmāyaṇe ayodhyākāṇḍe nandigrāmanivāsaḥ // samāptaś cedam ayodhyākāṇḍam iti // śubham astu // śrīr astu // la saṃ 507 kārttika śu di 8 chudher likhitāny etāni tālīparāṇi* [? for *°patrāṇi*] *dhammapatinā svārtham iti //*.

14. This is ms. 1921 of the Bangiya Sāhitya Pariṣad, to whom I am indebted for securing a microfilm of the ms. It is paged continuously with a *Bālakāṇḍa* ms. (no. 1920) and is on brownish country paper (c. 16×3 inches) on ff. 80-142, with 7 ll. to a side; ff. 80-91 are in the same hand as the *Bālakāṇḍa* and ff. 92-142 in another, tighter hand (without the central blank left for a string hole found on ff. 80-91).

15. The order of vv. 1-8 or their substitutes in BSP ms. 1921 is 154* (subst. for 1-5b), 6a-8d, 155* 4, 5cd; in the B mss. of the CE it is 154* (subst. for 1-4 in B3.4 and for 1-5b in B1.2), 8, 5/5cd (B3.4/B1.2), 155* 4, 6-7.

pare *atyucchritam* in D6), *utpannas tu guṇair jyeṣṭho* for *utpannas tvam guṇaśreṣṭho* at 3.23c, *pratipālyās tvayā prajāḥ* for *paripālyās* in the v.l. of Ñ2 V1 B3 at 82* 1, *tatra* as a marginal correction of the standard *rāma* at 82* 2, *ābhāṣya* for *āmantrya* at 3.32c[l.v.], *tam anuprāptam* for *samanuprāptam* at 4.9a, *taṃ* for *me* at 4.13a, *putra tat* for *tan me tvam* at 4.15d, *pitṛānuyukto* for *pitṛā niyukto* at 4.35a, *tena* for *yena* at 4.40c, *sa cintyamāno* for v.l. *sa cintayāno* at 5.1a, *samānīya* for *samāhūya* at 5.1c, *muniṣṭhagavaḥ* for *muni-sattamaḥ* at 5.4d, *tathā* for *tadā* at 5.16b, *pratibuddhamān* for *prati-vibudhya saḥ* at 6.5b, *ghoṣaś ca* for *ghoṣo 'tha* at 6.8a, *ca* for *tat* at 6.19b, *ākāṅkṣayanti* for *ākāṅkṣyamāṇā* at 6.19c (but compare *ākāṅkṣyamto hi* in V1), *janās* for *mīthas* at 6.20c, *anukṛtamanā rāmo* for *anuddhatamanā vidvān* at 6.23a, *śrīmān* for *rājā* at 6.24b, *sāsmi agādhe bhr̥ṣam* at 7.17a (a blend of the text and the NE v.l.), *sā* for *pra-* in v.l. for 7.17c, *kaikeyī bhr̥ṣaharsitā* at 7.27b, *tataḥ karasyābharaṇam* for *ekam ābharaṇam tasyai* at 7.27c, unique omission of 8.10ef, *putreṣu* for *sarveṣu* at 8.14c, *pāpe tvam* for *yā me tvam* at 8.17c (cf. *pāpā tvam* of B1), and *caivātra* for *cādyaiḥ* (v.l. *caivādyā*) at 8.27d[l.v.]. Variant readings shared only with one or other of the B manuscripts are not particularly frequent, but there are marginally more shared with B1 than with any of the others, although the proportion in this sample is not great enough to be really significant. Variants shared with non-Bengali manuscripts are widely spread and probably random, although it may perhaps be noted that a couple are shared with M4 only (at 4.41d and 6.3d).

While the considerable number of unique variant readings to be found in this manuscript are not individually of great moment, the total does indicate that the B version is less uniform than the evidence presented in the Critical Edition suggests. It is clear, however, that the manuscript is basically aligned with other manuscripts in Bengali script and this fact, seen also in the other manuscript just discussed, does tend to validate the postulation of such a version within the wider NE tradition. However, its relationship with manuscripts from neighbouring regions still needs further investigation. It was, indeed, a subsidiary aim of my visit to India in 1981 to search for further examples of manuscripts in the scripts less well represented. I was unable to discover any new

Maithili manuscripts of the *Ayodhyākāṇḍa*, which is the more regrettable, since my previous paper raised various questions about the extent to which V1 represents a distinct version. Nor was I able to locate any further Newari manuscripts, although I did locate one of the *Aranyakāṇḍa*¹⁶. But I did locate the set of Oriya manuscripts already mentioned, to which I now turn.

As might be expected from the way in which geographical distribution tends to parallel the recensional alignment of manuscripts, this Oriya *Ayodhyākāṇḍa* is generally quite close to the Bengali manuscripts, but not so close that it can be considered a mere offshoot from the Bengali version. Like it, the manuscript begins with sarga 3 of the Critical Edition¹⁷. Within its first half dozen sargas, to take again the same sample, it shows virtually the same number of unrecorded variant readings as of instances where it goes with one or other of the B manuscripts alone; however, a considerable proportion of these new variants are quite obviously corrupt readings, although some are of considerable interest¹⁸. There are also a couple of variants shared with V1 only (4.3a and 91*) and a couple with M4 (101* 1 post. and 140* 1 pr.), as well as one with G1 (5.16b) and a couple more generally with S manuscripts (3.8b and 5.21c). Omissions within this sample comprise: 3.14cd¹⁹, 4.5-7b (5ab uniquely, 5c-7b as B1.3 D6; cf. Ś1 Ñ2 etc.), 7.3 (with Ś1 V1 B D6 M4), 7.19-25 (with B1-3) and 8.10ef (uniquely). The sharing of 91* with V1 is particularly interesting,

16. This is ms. 4828 of the Government Collection in the Asiatic Society, Calcutta, which is a palm-leaf ms. of apparently 17th-century date in poor condition; I hope in due course to undertake some study of it from microfilm.

17. It has the exceptionally short preamble (compared with the B mss.): *om namo śrīgaṇeśāya // // avighnam astu // //*, before it begins the text.

18. There are 25 variants not recorded in the CE within this sample passage; the largest number of variants shared with one of the B mss. only is the nine shared with B4 (at 3.30ab, 4.44a, 5.17d, colophon of sarga 5, 6.3d, 120* 1, colophon of 7, 143* and 8.23d), to which may be added variants at 3.21a (V1 B3), 3.32b (Ś1 B4 D6) and 8.23c (B4 D1-5.7). The least likeness is to B3 (to which the first Bengali ms., G. 4824, was perhaps most similar).

19. This is clearly a scribal error, since the exact reading of the ms. from 14a to 15b reveals further confusion: *avatārya sumantraś ca rāghavaṃ manaso bhūyaṃ* (corrected in top margin to: *syandanottamāt*) // *dideśa rājā rucaram*) [= 18c] *sa taṃ kailāsaśrīgaṇabhaṃ prāsādaṃ narapumgavaḥ //*.

since not only is its position different (after 4.8ab instead of 4.6) but there is a variant *punaḥ* for *tataḥ* of V1.

Immediately after the sample, we may note the sequence of verses at the start of sarga 9, for the order of vv. 1-8 or their substitutes is identical with that in BSP ms. 1921 and different therefore from the B manuscripts of the Critical Edition²⁰. Yet immediately afterwards, in 10d, it reads *diteḥ sutaḥ* for *timidhvajaḥ* with B2 only. The similarity to BSP ms. 1921 is also significantly seen in one of the unrecorded variants, for *rāmaś ce* (1 akṣara illegible) *vitā rājā* at 8.13a can only be restored as the reading, *rāmaś ced bhavitā*, found in that manuscript.

Other possibly significant instances in the unrecorded variants should be mentioned. The reading at 3.9d is unfortunately partly illegible but enough is clear to establish that it was another variant for this rather unstable simile: *devā iva vā* (2 akṣaras illegible) *tūm* for *te devā iva vāsavam*. Its reading at 8.7a of *dharm-ātmā guṇavartī ca* seems intermediate between that of Ś1 N2 B D6 M4 (*dharmātmā guruvartī ca*) and that of V1 Dt1 D1-5.7 (*dharmajño guṇavān dāntaḥ* [*mātuḥ* in V1]). A slight clue to its background may be provided by its reading *cainaṃ* for *vairam* at 8.26d, since B1 has *tailam* and B2 *cailam*; confusion between *n* and *l* is more likely in Oriya than in Bengali script, suggesting that, if the B2 reading *cailam* underlies the other two, this manuscript miscopied an original in Oriya script. At 8.27d [l.v.] its reading *para caivāraṇyavāsakāraṇam*, though corrupt, points to what may be a more original reading than the rather weak *parasya cādyaiṣa vivāsa-kāraṇam* of the text (cf. the variants *caivāśya*, *caivādyā* and *cāvehi* of various mss.)²¹.

20. For details see fn. 15.

21. The full list of its unrecorded variants in its first six sargas (CE 3-8) is as follows: 3.9d given above, *prādīpayata* for *vyadīpayata* at 3.17b, *parokṣayā priyaṃ buddhyā* at 3.27a, *matravadbhiḥ* at 4.12c (cf. v.l. of B4: *maṃtravadbhiḥ*), *śvas te haṃ* for *śvas tvāhaṃ* at 4.22c, *evam* for *me tvaṃ* at 4.39c, *jīvitam cādya* (corr. to: *cāpi*) at 4.44c, *taṃ āgataṃ rṣiṃ mastvaraṇaḥ sasambhramaḥ* (corrupt) for 5.5ab, *sarvadā* for v.l. *sarvaśaḥ* at 6.16b, *rāmasya pūrayām āsa purīm jānapado janaḥ* (sg. for pl.) at 6.26cd, *pūrvam codirṇavegasya* for *parvasūdirṇa*² at 6.27c, *yauvarājye 'bhiṣecanam* for *yauvarājyābhiṣecanam* at 119* 2, *harṣitatara* for *harṣitaḥ sarvo* at 121* 1, *taivam uktvā kaikayīm* for *evam uktā tu kaikeyī* at 7.12a, *vāme priyaṃ kiṃ cid ataḥ param bhaved yad atra rājā sutam iṣṭam ātmajam* at 7.31ab [l.v.], *priyā* for *śrīyā* at 139* 1,

Certain points emerge from these details. On the one hand this Oriya manuscript shows considerable overall similarity to Bengali manuscripts (including, interestingly, the BSP ms. 1921), but on the other hand it also shows some convergence with the Maithili manuscript, V1, and with the S recension; I leave aside for the moment the question of M4. A complete collation of this manuscript, of which I have as yet done only part, should help to clarify the picture. For its incompleteness I can only plead in mitigation the demands of the Oriya script.

In conclusion, let me draw together some of the implications of this material, including that from my previous paper, for the Critical Edition and for existing views on the textual history of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. First and foremost, the existence of another manuscript in Malayāḷam script similar to M4 (and a fragment of a third) makes it difficult simply to dismiss M4 as «contaminated» or «a misch codex». Certainly, this alternative Malayāḷam tradition is a blend of N and S, but one which evidently enjoyed some currency. Moreover, readings unique to M4 in the critical apparatus of the Critical Edition are now found not only (as is to be expected) in the Trivandrum manuscript but also sporadically in the other manuscripts examined. To that extent its claims to be taken more seriously, as representing a reasonably old tradition, are enhanced. At the same time, the consistency of the S recension has been shown to be less complete than is commonly believed. The uniformity of the text associated with the main commentaries is at least in part an illusion engendered by the use of only one manuscript from each. In the previous paper it was shown that a manuscript in Telugu script (Ch.Sh.Sh. c. 410), linked with the text associated with Govindarāja's commentary, exhibits a significant proportion of new variants. In the present paper, study of a group of three manuscripts associated with the Tilaka commentary indicates the need for some modification there.

With regard to the N recensions, the alignment of M4 and the Trivandrum manuscript with D1.2 and to a lesser extent with V1

apṛītiṃ for v.l. *apṛītāṃ* at 8.6a, 8.7a given above, 8.13a given above, *tato* for *ato* in v.l. of B1.2.4 at 8.16a, *rāmaḥ* for *sa te* at 8.24a, and 8.26d and 27d[l.v.] (both given above).

led me to remark in the previous paper that the Critical Edition's scheme of recensions and versions is too limiting and that the status of the W recension (to which D1.2 supposedly belong, along with D3.5) is suspect. No more evidence regarding D1.2 has been produced by the manuscripts examined for this paper, but the way in which V1 goes partly with the Newari and Bengali manuscripts is given a new slant by the evidence of the Oriya manuscript which, while showing most similarity with the Bengali manuscripts, also shows some convergence with V1. It is not, of course, surprising that manuscripts written in areas either side of Bengal should show similarities with Bengali manuscripts, but their agreement with each other could point to the derivation of all three from a common ancestor rather than by spread from Bengal, although it will probably prove closer to the truth that both mechanisms were involved. In the same way, links of a manuscript in Oriya script both with Bengali manuscripts and with S manuscripts are not unexpected and to that extent this new Oriya manuscript produces no surprises. On the other hand, it is not just an offshoot from the Bengali version, as the convergences with V1 and with the S recension demonstrate. In fact, the evidence of this Oriya manuscript provides one more item in the accumulating data, which indicate that the simple opposition between N and S recensions — however useful it may once have been as a heuristic device — does not adequately represent the complexities of the chain of transmission involved. Only further work on the relationships between particular manuscripts or groups of manuscripts can clarify the picture.